

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Wall-E is a 2008 American computer-animated science fiction film produced by Pixar Animation Studios and directed by Andrew Stanton. *Wall-E* has been met with overwhelmingly positive reviews among critics, scoring an approval rating of 96% on the review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes. It grossed \$534 million worldwide, won the 2008 Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Feature Film, the 2009 Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form, the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature as well as being nominated for five other Academy Awards at the 81st Academy Awards. *Wall-E* ranks first in TIME's "Best Movies of the Decade."

The story of the film is deceptively simple. *Wall-E* (Waste Allocator Load Lifter - Earth Class) is the last of his kind, a robot created by the Buy-N-Large Corporation to clean up the piles of trash left on Earth by the conspicuous consumption of human beings. The humans themselves have evacuated the now-toxically trashed Earth for an Eden-like spaceship habitat called the Axiom (also created by BNL corp.), where they spend their days sipping meals out a cup and reclining on floating easy chairs. Though all his robotic compatriots have long since compacted their last, *Wall-E* continues plugging away at his job in an endearingly human way. He wakes up each day to the chime of a Macintosh starting up and heads out for another day among

the trash heaps. He brings a battered coolie along with him to save the things he likes: a ping-pong paddle, a plastic dinosaur toy, a light bulb, a small seedling saved in an old boot. He ends each day in his home, watching an old video tape of *Hello Dolly!* an important motif throughout the film.

In the not so distant future, humans have quite literally trashed the planet to the point it's uninhabitable. With no means to sustain themselves – the plants have all died or are buried under miles of garbage – humans have fled in luxurious spaceships where their every whim is satisfied by robots. After hundreds of years living in space not having to move a muscle, we've devolved to the point of being fat couch potato globs that vaguely resemble the Pillsbury Doughboy.

Back on Earth, *Wall-E* goes about his lonely job of compacting trash. It's what he was built for and programmed to do, and there's no reason for him to stop. He was inadvertently left turned on when everyone took off, so he goes about his work each and every day with only an indestructible cockroach named Hal for company. And after hundreds of years of this, *Wall-E* has developed a personality. He's an inquisitive little guy who collects weird items of trash that he then uses to furnish and decorate his home. He's also developed affection for *Hello, Dolly!* and watches the old VHS tape over and over again.

Hello, Dolly! Has taught *Wall-E* about holding hands and falling in love, and the lonesome robot has dreams of finding that someone special. After endless years of waiting, *Wall-E*'s shot at love appears in the form of a glistening egg-shaped drone named Eve. Eve was sent to Earth to check for any

signs of life, and our little *Wall-E* fall head over wheels for this state-of-the-art metallic cutie. He wants nothing more than to make a connection with this beauty, but Eve does not on the same wavelength. Fortunately, *Wall-E*'s a persistent suitor and when Eve's sent back to report her findings to the people on board the Axiom spaceship, *Wall-E* goes along for the ride. Nothing will stop this starry-eyed robot from being with his Eve, not hundreds of thousands of miles of space travel, evil robots, or weird jelly-ish people who've lost all concept of what life on Earth was like before their ancestors all but destroyed our planet.

A key figure in the development of Pixar Studios, Andrew Stanton was the writer-director of some of the computer animation company's biggest hits, including "Toy Story" (1995), "A Bug's Life" (1998), "Finding Nemo" (2003) and "*Wall-E*." In the grand tradition of Disney's animation team from the 1930s and such legendary figures as Ray Harryhausen and Don Bluth, Stanton's best films were a near-perfect balance of breathtaking visuals and heart-tugging emotion; the lifelike quality of cowboy toy Woody or the silent, industrious robot *Wall-E* never overwhelmed their fully rendered hopes and dreams and ambitions. The combination of these elements brought Stanton significant acclaim and considerable awards, but more importantly, it established him as one of the most creative figures in motion pictures - live action and animated - working in 21st century Hollywood.

Born Andrew Christopher Stanton, Jr., in Rockport, MA on Dec. 3, 1965, he received a BFA in character animation from the California Institute of

the Arts in 1987 before entering the professional world as an animator with Kroyer Films in the latter part of the decade. After working on a number of animated television series, including the legendary Ralph Bakshi's "Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures" (CBS, 1987-88), he became the second animator at a former computer hardware company turned computer animation company, Pixar Animation Studios. Stanton worked on the studio's first film, "Luxo Jr." (1986), which established the company's logo, a hopping desk lamp. The project, which was subsequently nominated for a Best Animated Short Oscar, helped to establish Pixar as a forward-thinking entity in the increasingly convoluted world of feature animation. With Stanton's help, they would become one of the leading lights in the animation world.

Stanton's first success with Pixar after "Luxo Jr." came as the initial screenwriter for its first feature-length hit, "Toy Story" (1995), which was produced after the company's purchase by Walt Disney Studios. Though the script was eventually re-written by Joss Whedon and Joel Cohen, among others, he and Pixar chief John Lasseter were responsible for its core story, which addressed universal themes of friendship and unconditional love in a classic Hollywood story of mismatched friends. The combination of mature subject matter - for kid-oriented animation, at least - rip-roaring adventure and sly, smart humor became Stanton's trademark at Pixar, as did his penchant for contributing a vocal cameo to each of his films. Stanton was also responsible for character design on "Toy Story," which won a special Academy Award in

1996; he also shared an Oscar nomination for his script with Lasseter and its many subsequent contributors.

The success of "Toy Story" elevated Stanton to co-director for Pixar's popular follow-up, "A Bug's Life" (1998), which he also co-wrote with Don McEnerny and Bob Shaw. The comedy-drama followed a storyline similar to that of "Toy Story" - another outcast, this time an ant with a knack for useless inventions, must partner with other insect misfits to rescue his colony from a horde of vicious grasshoppers - and performed heroically at the box office. Clearly, Stanton was ready to assume the mantle of solo director for Pixar's next effort, but he remained squarely as co-writer for its next two features, "Toy Story 2" (1999) and "Monsters, Inc" (2001), though he also served as executive producer on the latter. However, Stanton's ranking as a voice-over artist received a boost - he provided the doomy tones for astronaut toy Buzz Lightyear's sworn nemesis, the Evil Emperor Zurg, in "Toy Story 2."

The year 2003 found Stanton firmly in the director's chair with "Finding Nemo," which became one of Pixar's most well-loved pictures to date. A gentle and moving story at its core about a father's search for his missing child, the picture encompassed Stanton's trademark misfit team-up in a gaggle of eccentric fish who aid Nemo in returning to his dad, as well as some of the company's most stunning visuals. In addition to helming the film and co-writing its script, Stanton gave voice to one of the film's most amusing characters, an addled turtle named Crush who helps direct Nemo through the Australian current. A massive success in the summer movie season, "Finding

"Nemo" brought home an Oscar to Pixar for Best Animated Film, as well the 2004 Annie and a host of state and regional critics' awards. In 2008, the feature was named 10th on the American Film Institute's list of best animated films ever made.

After "Nemo," Stanton served as executive producer on Pixar's Oscar-winning "Ratatouille" (2007), as well as the 2003 documentary short "Exploring the Reef," which partnered famed oceanographer Jean-Michael Cousteau with his "Nemo" heroes Marlin (Albert Brooks) and Dory (Ellen DeGeneres). He also lent his vocal talents to many of the company's feature films, including "The Incredibles" (2004) and "Cars" (2006). But he donned the director's cap again in 2008 for "*Wall-E*," which was arguably his finest effort to date.

At once an epic science fiction film about a small but highly motivated robot whose primary mission - to clean up an abandoned and polluted Earth - transforms into a planet-wide rebirth, "*Wall-E*" moved critics and audiences worldwide with its sweet-natured and silent hero. It also stood as the benchmark by which all subsequent Pixar projects - and computer animated features as a whole - could be measured, thanks to its stunning visuals which approximated the look and feel of live-action footage to near-perfect degrees. Praised by nearly all major critics and periodicals, it was among the biggest hits of 2008, and reaped mightily at the award shows at the end of that year, including the Golden Globe and Academy Award for Best Animated Feature,

as well as placement on the American Film Institute and National Board of Review's Top 10 motion picture lists.

That same year, Stanton announced his next effort as director with "John Carter of Mars," an adaptation of the popular Jazz Age science fiction novels by "Tarzan" creator Edgar Rice Burroughs. The project had been purchased by Disney in 2007 for Stanton, who announced that he would return to that company as a "loan" to complete the project for a 2012 release.

The why of the writer choose *Wall-E's Self Existence to Keep the Last Plant in the Earth* as the object of the paper, there are four reasons.

The first reason because *Wall-E* movie is a unique movie. This movie is different with the other cartoon movie. In this movie we just find a little conversation. The director just shows us the funny action of Wall-E and another robot. The director creates the character of Wall-E as a unique robot. He is not talk. He only says 2 words. That is 'Wall-E' and 'Eve'. The word 'Wall-E' is use to introduce his name to the other people that he meets. And the word 'Eve' is use to call Eve when he looking for her. This movie is really funny but has so much moral messages. So, Wall-E movie is suitable to watch by all ages, from the children until the adult.

The second aspect is the visualization of the movie. *Wall-E* movie is a masterpiece of 3D movie. This movie is made by Pixar Animation studios. This studio has created so much cartoon movies such as: Toy Story in 1995, A Bug's Life in 1998, Toy Story 2 in 1999, Monsters, Inc. in 2001, Finding Nemo in 2003, The Incredibles in 2004, Cars in 2006, and Ratatouille in 2007. The

setting of this movie is so interesting. The crews are hard work to create the setting looks like the real. It makes the children like to watch this movie. Because of this achievement, *Wall-E* movie gets the Award as the best 3D cartoon movie in 2008.

The third aspect is the moral message of *Wall-E* movie. The director inserts so many messages in this movie. The main message is about environment. Wall-E as the central character has a main mission to save the last plant in the earth. The plant is very important because it will be use to save the earth. The earth has broken because there are so many trashes in there. By this movie Stanton wants to invite the audience to care with the earth. This movie tells us to planting so many plants and don't throw out the trash in every place. It will make our earth free global warming. Besides of that, we will get other messages from the characteristic of central character such as: never give up, care with other people, and like to help other people.

The last aspect is about the struggle of the major character to save the earth which is reflected in *Wall-E* movie. As the last robot in the earth Wall-E so cares with the earth. He always cleans the trash in everyday. It is to make the earth free from trash and becomes green again. Wall-E also helps Captain B. McCrea to save the earth. He helps Captain to fight against Auto. It is because Auto wants to foil the mission of Captain B. McCrea to back to earth. But, with the struggle of Wall-E, Eve, and Captain, the earth can be saving. Another Wall-E struggle is when Wall-E never gives up to getting love from Eve.

So, that is why the researcher is interested in analyzing this movie by using an existentialist approach and takes a title for his study **“WALL-E’S SELF EXISTENCE TO SAVE THE LAST PLANT IN THE EARTH IN ANDREW STANTON’S WALL-E MOVIE (2008): AN EXISTENTIALIST APPROACH”**.

B. Literature Review

After looking for several literary reviews in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, the writer has not found the research about *Wall-E* movie done by the other researcher.

There has been other researcher who research on *Wall-E* movie, the writer found it in the web site of:

Movie Smackdown (2009) *Up* (2009) VS *Wall-E* (2008). It compares the *UP* movie and *Wall-E* movie. This article discussed about the evolution of Pixar Animation Studios, not only in its place among cinema giants, but in terms of its characters and the stories it wants to tell. With each new project, every challenge proved bigger, ever limit was pushed.

Stephen Bell (2008) *Wall-E* (2008) VS *Toy Story* (1995). It compares *Wall-E* movie and *Toy Story* movie. This article discussed about the uniquely *Wall-E* movie than *Toy Story* movie. Much of the time, all we hear our main characters say are each other's names, resulting in a constant back-and-forth of "Wall-E...EVE...Wall-E...EVE" that could seem rather troubling on the page. However, none of this stumbles. The characters' relationship is engaging,

intimate and layered and we are with them every step of the way. The film's scope is epic, but the story's heart is small and focused on the love story between Wall-E and EVE.

The differences between the writer and the two previous writers are theme and the perspective. Movie Smackdown compares UP movie and Wall-E movie. Stephen Bell compares Wall-E and Toy Story. And the writer analyzed Wall-E's Self Existence to Save the Last Plant in the Earth in Andrew Stanton *Wall-E* movie using existentialist approach.

C. Problem Statement

Based on title and background above, the writer formulates the problem statement as follows: "How is Wall-E's Self Existence to Save the Last Plant in the Earth reflected in Andrew Stanton's *Wall-E* movie?"

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses this research in analyzing the Wall-E's Self Existence to Save the Last Plant in the Earth in Andrew Stanton's *Wall-E* movie based on existentialist approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows:

1. To analyze Andrew Stanton *Wall-E* movie based on the structural elements of the movie.

2. To describe Andrew Stanton *Wall-E* movie based on existentialist approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The writer hopes that this study has some benefits. They are:

1. Theoretical Benefits

a. Teacher/s

The writer hopes the result of this study can be useful for additional information that can be applied by the teacher/s in teaching and practicing existentialist.

b. Student/s

The result of this study can be used as a new knowledge and new vocabulary.

2. Practical Benefit

The writer hopes that this finding can be used by other researchers to open other analysis related to the research on existentialist.

G. Research Method

The research method of this study will be explained into five parts, namely (a) object of the study, (b) type of the data and data source, (c) type of the study, (d) technique of the data collection and (e) technique of the data analysis.

1. Object of the Study

The researcher took the Andrew Stanton's *Wall-E* as the object of his study.

2. Type of the Study

In this research, the researcher will use the qualitative research in the form of literary work. It also mentions the form of the data. There is no numeration either. So, statistic is not necessary in examining and exploring the facts in qualitative research. Therefore it will not require any calculation and enumeration.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

In the study there are two sources of data namely primary and secondary data sources.

a. Primary Data

The primary data source is the movie itself, *Wall-E* which had been released by Andrew Stanton in 2008.

b. Secondary Data

The writer takes the secondary data sources, including reference and materials related to the study whether picking up from books and internet, such as author's biography, the nominations of *Wall-E* and many other data related to this research.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

Technique of the data collection will be in form of library research. There will be some techniques:

- a. Watching and learning the movie repeatedly and carefully.
- b. Taking notes of the influence information in both primary data and secondary data.
- c. Arranging the data into several parts based on its classification
- d. Selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

In this study is using the Existentialist analysis, in which the writer tries to describe the structural elements of the movie, and Existentialist analysis of the movie.

H. Research Paper Organization

This paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which explains background of the study, literary review, problem statement, and limitation of the study, objective of the study, benefit of the study, research method, and research paper organization. The second chapter is underlying theory of Existentialist perspective. The third chapter consists of structural analysis of the movie and discussion. The fourth chapter consists of analysis based on Existentialist approach. And the last chapters are conclusion and suggestion.